



PARENT HANDBOOK

September 2021

PARENT HANDBOOK for Hillcrest Christian Early Learning Center
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MISSION STATEMENT

To give children loving, quality care and to help them develop a love of learning by:

-providing a nurturing, Christian environment,

-meeting their individual educational, social and emotional needs and

-supplementing their parents' efforts.

WELCOME

Welcome to our Hillcrest Family! We are so happy you have chosen our center to care for your child. You are joining an amazing community of children, parents and employees. By partnering with you, we are confident your child will thrive here.

HCELC is an integral part of the ministry of Hillcrest Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Hillcrest is committed to being a congregation that demonstrates true community, deep Christian spirituality and a passion for justice. The congregation and its pastors are available to assist HCELC families whenever needs arise. A committee of church members provides oversight and guidance to the early learning center. This committee meets bimonthly and is a resource available to parents and employees.

We encourage you to visit our center anytime during our normal operating hours. You can read books to the class, eat lunch with the children or volunteer for field trips. Your involvement will enrich all children's experiences in our center.

Our center provides many opportunities for you to meet other families in the center. You can work with other families to support our program, learn from one another and provide support to one another. We encourage parents to participate in leadership roles within our Parent Advisory Committee (P.A.C.). The P.A.C. meets at least three times a year at 6 p.m. to plan ways to show teachers appreciation throughout the year, including Teacher Appreciation Week in May and the Holiday season in December. They also work together to obtain donations for our annual auction fundraising event. All families are welcome to attend the P.A.C meetings! Babysitting and a light dinner are provided by the center. We hope to see you there!

The policies and procedures in this handbook have evolved with input from parents and employees. Please take time to read through all of the information; we are confident it will answer many of your questions about the operation of our center. If you prefer to have this information in a language other than English, please let the center Director know and a translated copy will be provided.

We welcome questions and suggestions! Please feel free to discuss them with any administrator, teacher or other parents at a P.A.C. Meeting.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

We believe children learn and grow when they are in an affectionate, accepting and Christian environment. To us, learning begins with playing, so we view play as an important part of a child's experience at Hillcrest. We also believe the freedom to express feelings helps children develop a positive self-image.

We encourage children to use their intellectual and creative abilities and to develop habits of observation, questioning and listening. We also teach that every choice has a consequence, so children will learn to make positive choices. Christian values are integrated into learning through weekly chapel, circle time and our approach to discipline.

It is our policy that every child in our care participates in a normal developmental environment regardless of his or her individual abilities. We make every possible effort within The Americans with Disabilities Act and Kansas licensing guidelines to ensure every child receives the same opportunities for learning, love, and individual attention. If, at any time, the teachers cannot meet a child's needs within normal operational guidelines, the teachers, administration and parents meet to discuss and plan the child's placement, abilities and needs. We do what we can within the means of the center to accommodate the child's needs, including outside referrals and resources.

When the center's values and practices differ from the family's values and practices, teachers and families work together to help children participate successfully in our center. We adapt our environment, curriculum and teaching methods based on information families share when they enroll in our center. If the child's needs cannot be met, the parents may be asked to find alternate care for their child.

The HCELC admission policy is non-discriminatory in regard to race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap or gender.

LICENSING

4.1 Governmental Licensing

HCELC is licensed by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Our license number is:

0029423-012

4.2 Accreditation

HCELC is proud to be accredited by the National Accreditation Commission (NAC) for Early Care and Education Programs.

CENTER HOURS

HCELC is open from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Parents receive advance notification should there be a need to change our normal hours of operation.

5.1 Ten Hour Days

Children may attend the center for a total of no more than ten hours per day. The church committee and center employees feel this is in the best interest of the children. Also, if we provide more hours of care per day, we would be required to provide another full meal.

If a child remains in the center longer than ten hours, the parents will be notified and asked to correct the situation. Repeated incidents will result in termination of care.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

All teachers and staff have been carefully interviewed and selected on the basis of educational background, experience and most importantly, love of children. All employees are required to undergo a physical exam with a TB test and must have a child abuse registry check by the Kansas Bureau of Investigation within the first 30 days of beginning work. All teachers are CPR and First Aid certified no later than thirty days from their date of hire.

ENROLLMENT

Enrollment at HCELC is open to children from six weeks old to 5th grade. The following documents and payments are due before enrollment is complete:

- Enrollment application
- Signed Contract for Child Care Services
- Immunization records/Health Assessment
- Enrollment fee
- Tuition deposit for last week's tuition

HCELC reserves the right to dismiss any parent or child at any time with or without cause.

Continued enrollment at HCELC is contingent upon the parents', emergency contact persons' and child's adherence to the policies and procedures of HCELC as outlined in this handbook including, but not limited to, timely payment of all fees and tuition.

Parents are required to notify HCELC immediately, should any of the information collected at the time of enrollment or any time thereafter change. Failure to do so may result in the child(ren) being disenrolled from the program and forfeiture of any deposit.

TUITION

All custodial parents and/or legal guardians are required to sign a “Contract for Child Care Services” prior to enrollment of their child. Parents are required to indicate to whom all billing information and correspondence are to be addressed.

8.1 Enrollment Fees

At the time of enrollment, a non-refundable fee of \$100 per child is due. A deposit of one week’s tuition is due and will be credited to your account when two weeks notice of withdrawal is given. Vacation Days may not be used during the two week notice period.

8.2 Payment Schedule

We accept cash, check, money order and electronic withdrawals to pay tuition. Receipts are given for tuition payments, if requested in writing. All cash payments must be handed directly to the Business Manager or Director. Canceled checks serve as receipts for payments made by check. A \$30.00 fee is charged for checks returned by the bank. Parents are responsible for re-issuing a second check. If the bank returns the second check, all future tuition payments must be made by cash, certified check or money order.

8.3 Late Payments

Tuition payments are due by Monday at 6:00 pm in the box located in the front hallway. If a payment is not in by Monday at 6:00 pm, a \$10 per week late fee is assessed. Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program. Timely payments are essential for continued enrollment at HCELC. If you anticipate difficulty paying on time, please discuss the matter with the Business Manager immediately.

SECTION 8 (cont'd)

8.5 Foster Care

HCELC accepts foster care payments. Foster care workers verify a child's qualifications for benefits and the HCELC Business Manager processes the appropriate paperwork at the end of each month. Many agencies require foster parents to verify attendance. Foster parents must sign and return HCELC attendance reports the next business day.

8.6 Multiple Child Discount

HCELC offers a multiple child discount for one or more siblings enrolled during the same school year. The full tuition rate applies to the youngest child and each additional child's tuition is discounted 5%. Discounts are only applicable when tuition payments are made on time. Discounts do not apply to school day out care.

8.7 Vacation Policy

After one year of continuous attendance at HCELC, your child may be absent without payment for one week of vacation each year. Vacation may be taken by the day or the week. Vacation will not carry over into the next year, which begins on the anniversary of the child's start date at Hillcrest. Please send an email to the Business Manager to request vacation days.

8.8 Referral Bonus

If a family enrolling in HCELC was referred by a family already enrolled in our center, the referring family receives credit for the weekly tuition rate they pay for their youngest child after the referred family has attended our center for six months. This referral bonus applies only to children enrolled in our year round program for ages infant through pre-k. Families with children enrolled only in our summer camp or school age programs and families who refer others to our summer camp or school age programs are not eligible for this referral bonus.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Within HCELC, confidential and sensitive information is only shared with HCELC employees who have a “need to know” in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, other parents and/or other children will not be shared with parents, as HCELC strives to protect everyone’s right of privacy. All children’s files are kept in a locked cabinet in the Administrative Assistant’s Office. HCELC Administrators and your child’s Lead Teacher may access his/her file to plan accordingly for your child. Outside of HCELC Administration and Lead Teachers, confidential and sensitive information about your child will only be shared when you give express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law. Parents are provided a document detailing the information that is to be shared outside of HCELC, the persons with whom the information will be shared and the reason(s) for sharing the information.

You may observe children at our center who are disabled or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting, and spitting). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child’s privacy. HCELC employees are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. HCELC takes very seriously the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with our center. We ask you to understand the implications of this responsibility and recognize the Confidentiality Policy not only applies to your child or family, but to all children, families and employees associated with HCELC. Any parent who shares confidential information or pressures employees or other parents for information which is not necessary for them to know, will be considered to be in violation of the Confidentiality Policy.

MANDATED REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Mandated reporters are required to report any **suspicion** of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of HCELC are considered mandated reporters, under this law. HCELC employees are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report. Mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at HCELC take this responsibility very seriously and make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. This is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

As mandated reporters, HCELC employees cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in “good faith.”

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child’s body
- ◆ Severe verbal reprimands
- ◆ Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season
- ◆ Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- ◆ Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- ◆ Not providing appropriate meals including a drink
- ◆ Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time
- ◆ Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- ◆ Sending a sick child to school over-medicated to hide symptoms, which would typically require the child to be kept at home until symptoms subside.
- ◆ Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

One of our goals is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of HCELC employees, but also the responsibility of each parent or adult who enters the center. Parents are asked to behave in a courteous, decent and respectful manner. Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will not be permitted on HCELC property thereafter.

11.1 Complaint Procedures

While parents will not always agree with HCELC employees or parents of other children, we expect disagreements to be handled in a calm and respectful manner. HCELC uses a variety of techniques to negotiate difficulties that arise in the center. Should you have a complaint concerning our center, our employees or our procedures, you may talk to your child's teacher. If you are dissatisfied with the teacher's response, contact the HCELC Director or Assistant Director. If you are dissatisfied with her response, contact the HCELC Team Leader. The name and contact information for the current leader may be obtained from the HCELC Business Manager.

11.2 Swearing/Cursing

No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on HCELC property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will not be tolerated. If a parent or adult feels frustrated or angry, it is more appropriate to verbally express the frustration or anger using non-offensive language. At NO time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff.

11.3 Physical/Verbal Punishment of Your Child or Other Children

We do not support nor condone corporal punishment of children; such acts are not permitted in our child care facility. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate, it is not appropriate for parents to verbally abuse their child. Doing so may cause undue embarrassment or emotional distress. Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavioral issue with the teacher and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures. Parents are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. Of course, no parent or other adult may physically punish another parent's child. If a parent witnesses another parent's child behaving in an inappropriate manner, or is concerned about behavior

SECTION 11 (cont'd)

reported to them by their own child, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the classroom teacher and/or Director. Furthermore, it is wholly inappropriate for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the classroom teacher's or Director's attention. At that point, the teacher and/or Director will address the issue with the other parent. Although you may be curious as to the outcome of such a discussion, teachers and/or the Director are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. All children enrolled in our center have privacy rights and are further protected by our Confidentiality Policy. You may be assured we will not discuss anything about your child with another parent or adult visiting the center.

11.4 Smoking and Illegal Substances

For the health of all HCELC employees, children and associates, smoking, alcohol & illegal substances are prohibited anywhere on HCELC property. Parents are prohibited from smoking in the building, on the grounds and in the parking lot. Parents who are smoking in their cars must dispose of the cigarette prior to entering the parking lot.

11.5 Safety Policy Violations

Parents are required to follow all safety procedures at all times. These procedures are designed to protect the welfare and best interest of the employees, children and associates of HCELC. Absolutely no firearms are allowed on HCELC property. If you are required to carry a weapon for work purposes, we ask that you lock the weapon in your car.

Please be particularly mindful of HCELC entrance procedures and help us make sure unauthorized individuals are not allowed into the center. Holding the door open for the person following you may be polite, however, you may be allowing an unauthorized person to enter. Security procedures are only as strong as the weakest person in our organizational chain. Be alert and mindful. Immediately report any breaches to the Director. We ask that you only give the door code to people who are picking up your child on a regular basis. If someone who is unfamiliar with the center comes to pick up your child, please let us know in advance so we can plan to meet them when they arrive and help them find your child.

SECTION 11 (cont'd)

11.6 Use of Children's Bathrooms

In order to protect everyone's privacy, parents may only enter a children's bathroom at Hillcrest when they are assisting their own child and only when no other children are in the bathroom. At no time may parents or visitors enter the children's bathrooms when children other than their own are present and at no time may they use the facilities in the children's bathrooms. Parents and visitors may use the public bathrooms located upstairs between the main entrance doors and the sanctuary when no children are in them. (Only one classroom uses those bathrooms, so the bathrooms are often either vacant or soon-to-be vacant.)

PARENT'S RIGHT TO IMMEDIATE ACCESS

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at HCELC, as provided by law. In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) HCELC must be provided with a **certified copy** of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court are strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order. If conflicting court orders are presented, the most recently dated court order is followed. Once presented with a Protection from Abuse Order or a Restraining Order, HCELC is obligated to follow the order for the entire period it is in effect. Employees of HCELC cannot, at the request of anyone except the issuing judge, allow a Protection from Abuse Order and/or a Restraining Order to be violated. HCELC will report any violations of these orders to the court.

In the absence of a court order on file with HCELC, **both** parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. HCELC cannot, without a court order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, we suggest the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain the child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. HCELC staff contact the local police should a conflict arise.

DISMISSAL

HCELC reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause and will not discriminate in regard to race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap or gender. Parents are refunded unused tuition within two weeks of a dismissal. An HCELC check is mailed to the address indicated in the child's file. Any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of the dismissal. An invoice detailing the past due balance is forwarded to the address indicated in the child's file within one week of the dismissal.

The parents of a dismissed child are required to call and request an appointment with the Center Director if they wish to return to HCELC property following a dismissal. Appointments are made at the discretion of the Center Director and are not a right of the dismissed child or parent.

Following a dismissal, any parent or child who harasses, threatens or in any manner causes harm to anyone affiliated with the center by calling, writing, or any other means, will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, by HCELC.

WITHDRAWAL

Two weeks written notice is required when withdrawing a child for any reason. If the proper notice is given, the tuition deposit paid at enrollment is credited to your account.

Resources and Referrals

Lead Teachers track the developmental progress of each child in their classroom on the and share this information with parents during parent/teacher conferences. If a teacher expresses concern with a certain area of your child's development, you are given the reasons for the concern and copies of all documentation (see section 20.4 "Assessment" for details on this process).

Many studies show that children experiencing developmental delays benefit from support services starting before public school enrollment. We believe parents should make the primary decisions about a child's goals and plans for services and encourage you to raise any concerns you have about your child. While parents are the primary advocate to obtain services, we want to work collaboratively with you to find solutions that can be incorporated into our daily classroom routine. If at any time, you want to investigate services for your child, HCELC will provide information for various local programs, act as your advocate in accessing services, work to make a smooth transition into programs and provide feedback for your child.

HCELC teachers and administrators have many resources in the Early Education field they can share with you. You will find a "Johnson County Community Resource Booklet" in each classroom and a resource book for a larger geographic area in the Director's office. HCELC Administration also has information on enrollment procedures, calendars and program options for Olathe, Blue Valley and Shawnee Mission School Districts, as well as other Early Education Programs.

If you have any questions, feel free to ask the Assistant Director or Director for more information.

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

Children must be supervised at all times while in our center, so we ask you to supervise your child until their outerwear is put away, they are with a teacher in the classroom and they are settled to begin their day with us. The teacher will sign the child in on Brightwheel.

We discourage parents from sneaking out of the center. Some children exhibit separation anxiety when it is time for their parent to leave. We believe it is best for parents to tell the anxious child upon arrival that after all of the child's things are put away, the parent will kiss, hug and say goodbye to the child. This will prepare the child for their departure. The employee present in the classroom will comfort and assist the child through the anxious time. Parents are asked to leave after saying goodbye. The longer the parent of an anxious child drags out the departure, the more anxiety the child is likely to feel. The professional employees of HCELC are available to discuss other options if the child does not settle into the arrival routine after a reasonable period of time.

At arrival, parents are required to follow the Medication Policy if a child must receive medication during the course of the day (see section 27.5).

HCELC does not serve or provide breakfast in the morning. Children may bring a snack to eat once they are in their classroom if they have not had breakfast.

16.1 Notification of Absence

Please call the center or send a message in Brightwheel by 9:30 a.m. if your child will be absent or arriving after 9:30 a.m. that day. This helps us maintain appropriate teacher-child ratios and helps your child's teacher plan for the day.

If your child is ill, we request that you notify the Center, not only of the absence, but also the nature of the illness. This information will only be shared with employees on a "need to know" basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis, so other parents may be notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information is shared. HCELC takes all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality. Parents are not required to disclose this information by law, and your continued enrollment is not based whatsoever on your decision to share, (or not) the reason for your child's absence from our center.

16.2 Right to Refuse Admission

HCELC reserves the right to refuse admission to any child at any time with or without cause. Possible reasons for the refusal of admission include, but are not limited to:

1. Our center closing due to inclement weather or an act of God
2. The need to maintain compliance with licensing regulations
3. A child deemed too ill to attend
4. A domestic situation that presents a safety risk to the child, employees or other children enrolled at HCELC if the child were to be present at the center
5. Parent's failure to maintain accurate, up to date records
6. Parents' failure to complete and return required documentation in a timely fashion
7. Parent's failure to pay tuition in a timely manner

Parents are not reimbursed tuition for days when their child is refused admission to the program unless the center is closed due to inclement weather or an act of God.

PICK UP PROCEDURES

People under the age of eighteen cannot pick up a child from our center, even if the person is a sibling of the child. Once your child has been signed out, you are then solely responsible for supervising your child while on HCELC premises. Please do not allow your child to wander through the hallways, bathrooms, other classrooms or playground unsupervised.

Please check your child's classroom file and cubby and take home all papers each day.

17.1 Late Pick Up

Our center closes promptly at 6:00 pm. It is not acceptable to be late picking up your child. Parents are expected to arrive slightly before 6:00 pm, pick up their child and paperwork and depart the building by 6:00 pm. Parents should not expect teachers to discuss matters that happen during the day or wait while a child plays in the building after the center is closed. All measurements of time are according to the classroom iPad. If you are in a situation where you are not going to arrive on time, please call the center to notify us. **A fee of \$5 per minute past 6:00 pm will be charged to your account on the day following a late pick up.**

A child's services are terminated should the child be picked up late on repeated occasions, regardless of the reasons for the late pick-up. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that someone (either a parent or emergency/alternate pick-up person) is available to pick up the child on time.

17.2 Persons Appearing to be Impaired by Drugs or Alcohol at Pick-Up

An HCELC employee contacts local police and/or another custodial parent should a parent appear to the employee to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.

Any other authorized person who attempts to pick up a child, and appears to an employee to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol is also denied access to the child. The employee contacts the child's parents, local police and Child Protective Services to notify them of the situation.

17.3 Emergency / Alternate Pick-Up Forms

At enrollment, parents are given an Emergency/Alternate Pick-up form. Parents are encouraged to include on this form any and all persons who, in the course of events, may at one time be asked to pick up their child from our center. In an emergency situation, the child's parents are called first. If they cannot be reached, the persons listed on this form are contacted until someone is reached.

If we contact a parent, and the parent is unable to pick up the child, it is then the responsibility of the parent to arrange for their child to be picked up by someone on the emergency list.

When another contact person is picking up your child, we ask that you let your child's teacher know who will be picking up. If the person is not listed on the emergency contact form, you must submit the request in writing prior to the person arriving. No child will be released to someone who is not listed on the emergency contact form without written consent of the parent. All changes and/or additions to the Emergency/Alternate Pick-up form must be made in writing and be dated and signed. Only custodial parents have the right to make changes or additions to this form.

CENTER CALENDAR

Holiday Closings:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- Day After Christmas

When a holiday falls on a Saturday, the center will be closed the preceding Friday. When a holiday falls on a Sunday, the center will be closed on Monday.

In-Service Closings:

Each year, HCELC staff must complete training hours required by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. In order to complete these hours, HCELC will be closed the following days:

- Good Friday
- 2nd Friday in August

Normal tuition rates apply to days the center is closed due to these holidays or in-service training.

EMERGENCY CLOSING AND INCLEMENT WEATHER INFORMATION

In the event of an emergency closing and/or inclement weather, parents are notified of the closing by our website, Facebook page, e-mail, Brightwheel and a recorded message accessed by calling the center any time after 6:00 a.m. that day.

When the center closes in the middle of the day, we attempt to reach the child's parents first to arrange for pick up. If we are unable to reach the parents, the persons listed on the emergency contact form are called until pick up arrangements are made. The person who will be picking up will be informed of the pick-up location if the children have been evacuated from the center. Parents or emergency contact persons should report directly to the alternate location if one is indicated.

Should the center need to close for any reason, tuition will not be refunded or reduced for closures of two days or less. If the closure extends beyond two days, tuition charges will be prorated on the next week's billing cycle.

CURRICULUM & TEACHING

20.1 Curriculum

Our center uses three types of curriculum:

“**Creative Curriculum**”, which is nationally recognized and designed to provide children a consistent, loving atmosphere where they learn to be actively involved in all aspects of their environment, both physical and social. This curriculum addresses all areas of children’s development, including Social/Emotional, Language, Cognitive and Physical.

“**Weekday Early Education Curriculum**” provides a Christian component to children’s development. Teachers use Bible stories, religious holidays, weekly chapel, Christian morals and Christian values in lesson plans.

“**Conscious Discipline®**” is a comprehensive classroom management program and a social-emotional curriculum. It is based on current brain research, child development information, and developmentally appropriate practices. Conscious Discipline® has been specifically designed to make changes in the lives of adults first. The adults, in turn, change the lives of children. Our teachers implement Conscious Discipline® by developing skills to help children become aware of and express their feelings, work out conflict and become a school family. HCELC teachers use and teach specific breathing techniques and the use of Safe Space to create an environment that fosters safety, models composure and pro-social behavior, and helps children to become aware of, and in turn, manage conflicts and their emotions appropriately. Every child learns how to be helpful, take responsibility, and offer kindness and love to people around them.

Parent involvement is encouraged in all aspects of our curriculum. HCELC encourages parents to visit the classroom anytime to visit with their child. If parents are unable to do so for work reasons, they can still contribute to the class by suggesting activities, ideas, language and traditions that reflect their child’s home environment. We also encourage parents to share their individual experiences, goals, celebrations and hopes for their child’s development with us. This process is important to ensure the incorporation of different cultures and traditions into the classroom environment.

Play-based learning is our learning philosophy. We believe children learn best through active participation in their environment. Therefore, we strive to promote trust, independence and self-control in children by setting clear age-appropriate and individual-appropriate expectations. We allow children opportunities to learn by doing, observing, exploring, interacting and making their own independent choices. These opportunities are

SECTION 20 (cont'd)

provided through a variety of activities and interactions as reflected on each classroom's daily schedule and weekly lesson plans.

Daily Schedules are based on the individual needs of the children in the classroom. They include child-initiated play for at least one-third of each day and are located in the "Parent Corner" of each classroom. According to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, children in attendance at the center for more than four hours must be encouraged to nap to meet their individual needs. Our center has set times for each class to observe quiet time. Children who do not fall asleep may engage in quiet activities during nap time.

20.2 Weekly Lesson Plans Each plan addresses the four areas of development, as well as the Christian area of development. The areas of development are clearly labeled under each activity to ensure a well-rounded lesson plan. Each day, teachers use individual, small group and large group activities, as well as music and movement, to continually observe, assess and address each child's individual goals and development.

Our center recognizes that each child develops at his or her own rate. Therefore, lesson plans are flexible and address the individual goals set for each child in their classroom. Children's individual goals and objectives are determined using the tools outlined in section 20.4, "Assessment".

20.3 Child Portfolios A portfolio is evidence of a child's learning, collected over time, which demonstrates a child's effort, progress and achievement. When a child is enrolled in our center, the child's Lead Teacher begins creating the child's portfolio by collecting classroom observations, photos of participation in various activities, art work and the developmental assessment tools. All portfolios are kept confidential in the locked teacher's cabinet; however, parents may have access to their child's portfolio any time, upon request.

When a child moves to a different classroom, the child's portfolio is given to the child's new Lead Teacher. The portfolio allows the new Lead Teacher to see the child's developmental progress as well as the goals to help the child reach the next stages of their physical, cognitive, language and social/emotional development. By the time the child goes to Kindergarten, the portfolio provides an excellent reflection of the child's development during their years in our center.

SECTION 20 (cont'd)

20.4 Assessment Our center uses various assessment tools to evaluate a child's physical, cognitive, language and social/emotional development, including health and self-help skills.

All teachers receive training on assessment procedures and materials. Using various sources of evidence, they identify a child's interests and needs, allowing them to monitor the child's developmental progress. Assessment guides teachers' weekly lesson plans, changes to the learning environment and teaching strategies that support an increase in children's skill levels. Assessment also allows our program as a whole to be accountable for providing developmentally appropriate care across all areas of children's development. Most importantly, it provides an opportunity for teachers and parents to collaborate on realistic expectations and goals for children.

Observations are a key part of assessment. Observations are done in the child's current classroom by teachers who work with the child on a daily basis. Teachers who observe, document events in anecdotal note form. Parents are encouraged to let their child's teacher know about the skills they observe at home.

Teachers provide parents frequent verbal updates, as well as written notes in Brightwheel, about their child's development and learning. In addition, formal conferences are scheduled twice a year.

Parent/Teacher Conferences are conducted in the autumn and spring. Parents are given an opportunity to schedule a time to meet with their child's Lead Teacher. During the conference, teachers share the child's assessment and any observations recorded. The Lead Teachers and parents then work together to set common goals and to identify ways to achieve these goals at school and home. If the Lead Teacher feels further developmental screenings or referrals are needed, the teacher notifies the parents, either during conferences or at other times of the year. If parents want to meet and/or collaborate on goals outside of the conference timeframe, their child's Lead Teacher will schedule a meeting, upon the parent's request. If a child is meeting with outside professionals, parents may invite those professionals to attend the conference with the parent.

20.5 Transitions

Children are assigned a classroom based on state licensing regulations, availability and their developmental needs. In order to make transitions to a new classroom as smooth as

SECTION 20 (cont'd)

possible, parents and teachers receive a transition letter from the administration informing them of the child's move date and the classroom they will be moving to prior to the week of transition. Lead teachers work together to set up times for the child to visit their new classroom. In order to ensure a positive transition experience, teachers, administrators, and parents discuss any new routines, procedures, special needs or concerns they may have.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT and SUPERVISION

21.1 Classroom Management

HCELC believes keeping children busy and actively engaged decreases the frequency of behavior problems in the classroom. Transition activities help the children move smoothly from one activity to another. Our teachers are instructed to use only positive guidance and redirection to manage most behavior issues. Setting consistent, clear and understandable limits, fosters the child's ability to become self-disciplined, which is our ultimate goal. We encourage our teachers to try to ignore negative behavior as much as possible (since much of it is an effort for attention) and focus their attention on the children who are doing what is appropriate. Hopefully, this draws the child into the group and avoids the need for frequent discipline.

Children are born with enormous creativity! We feel too much discipline destroys their spirit. By teaching children each choice they make has a direct consequence, they begin to learn to be responsible for their own actions. Teachers never use physical punishment, such as shaking or hitting, and do not engage in psychological abuse or coercion. They never use threats or derogatory remarks and do not withhold, nor threaten to withhold, food as a form of discipline. We also follow the KDHE regulation (K.A.R. 28-4-427.d.2) prohibiting punishment which is humiliating, frightening or physically harmful to the child. Prohibited methods of punishment include: corporal punishment, verbal abuse, threats or derogatory remarks about the child or the child's family, binding or tying to restrict movement, enclosing in a confined space such as a closet, locked room, box or similar cubicle and withholding or forcing foods.

“Conscious Discipline®” is a comprehensive classroom management program and a social-emotional curriculum. It is based on current brain research, child development information, and developmentally appropriate practices. Conscious Discipline® has been specifically designed to make changes in the lives of adults first. The adults, in turn, change the lives of children. Our teachers implement Conscious Discipline® by developing skills to help children become aware of and express their feelings, work out conflict and become a school family. HCELC teachers use and teach specific breathing techniques and the use of Safe Space to create an environment that fosters safety, models composure and pro-social behavior, and helps children to become aware of, and in turn, manage conflicts and their emotions appropriately. Every child learns how to be helpful, take responsibility, and offer kindness and love to people around them.

SECTION 21 (cont'd)

Infant/Toddler/2s Policy: It is HCELC's belief that no discipline should be used on children under the age of 12 months. Toddlers are redirected by teachers when engaging in unwanted behavior. Teachers ignore negative behavior and praise good choices. Biting is a developmental stage some children go through at this age. (Please see policy 27.4 for more information regarding biting.) If a toddler is experiencing a tantrum, they are monitored in a safe area so they do not harm themselves or others around them.

2 ½ Years-Kindergarten Policy: Teachers are trained in developmentally appropriate methods of disciplining. First, teachers ignore negative behaviors and focus on those positive choices children are making. Children are encouraged to work out differences between each other. Teachers may redirect a child to another area in a room if they are having difficulty.

School-Age Policy: Teachers involve children in planning activities and setting classroom rules. The children suggest consequences for breaking rules. At no time are consequences physical punishment or derogatory towards a child. This fosters a sense of community within the classroom. Teachers ensure classroom rules are within developmentally appropriate guidelines.

For children with persistent, serious challenging behavior, teachers, families and other professionals work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success at HCELC. Teachers observe children who have challenging behavior. They identify events, activities, interactions and other contextual factors that predict challenging behavior and may contribute to the child's use of challenging behavior. Teachers address challenging behaviors by assessing the function of the behavior, conferencing with families and professionals to develop a plan to address the behavior, and using positive behavior support strategies.

21.2 Supervision

All Children: Teachers supervise all children by sight and sound. Mirrors, videos or sound monitors are not used in lieu of direct visual and auditory supervision. Teachers are aware of, and positioned so they can hear and see any sleeping children, especially when they are actively engaged with children who are awake.

TOILET TRAINING

Experts agree children who potty train easily have parents who are calm and patient and show a matter-of-fact attitude toward toilet training. Our teachers are prepared to work with parents to prepare older toddlers for this important milestone in their lives. No two children are alike and, as such, children train differently and at different times. No evidence suggests that a child who is trained by the age of 30 months is “brighter” than a child who is trained at 36 months. Parents and teachers should not, therefore, compare children.

Children begin potty training when they transition to Room 104. We ask parents to meet with their child’s teacher prior to beginning potty training because it is vital that the teachers and parents communicate and are consistent about toilet training. Our teachers know toilet training is a gradual process that takes time and understanding. No child is ever forced to sit on the potty or ridiculed in any way for soiling pants. We do not use negative tactics to toilet train. We encourage and praise the child for successes and show understanding and patience when accidents occur. We let the child know we have confidence in them and believe in their ability to succeed.

During the training, parents are asked to supply the center with three sets of clothing per day. If a child does not have enough clothes, the teacher calls the parent and asks him/her to bring clothing immediately.

TOYS FROM HOME

Due to the risk of damage, sharing issues and the potential for loss, children are discouraged from bringing toys from home unless it is Show & Share Day. If parents allow their child to bring a toy from home, we ask that the toy be age-appropriate and small enough to fit in the child's cubby. HCELC is not responsible for lost or damaged toys.

DRESS CODE

Children are engaged in various activities during the course of the day; some of them are messy, and/or athletic in nature. Additionally, children are engaged in outdoor play daily, weather permitting. Due to these activities, children must be dressed in seasonably appropriate, comfortable clothing.

Coats, hats, gloves and scarves must be provided in the winter months. During the summer, please apply sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher before bringing your child and we will reapply, as needed throughout the day. We do not apply insect repellent because the Kansas Department of Health and Environment does not recommend it for daycares in this area. The most appropriate type of shoes for participation in school activities are rubber-soled sneakers/tennis shoes.

If your child is under 2 years of age, please make sure we have at least two seasonably and size appropriate complete changes of clothing at the center at all times. If your child is between the ages of 2 through 5, please make sure we have at least one seasonably and size appropriate complete change of clothing at the center at all times. A complete change of clothing includes shirt, pants, underwear, socks and shoes. Clothes are kept in the child's cubby.

Please clearly label all clothing items with your child's first and last names. **This includes coats, hats, gloves, scarves, and boots.** HCELC is not responsible for lost or damaged clothing.

When choosing accessories for your child, please be mindful of potential safety issues, not only for your child, but also for the other children attending our center. Children are not permitted to wear jewelry of any kind. It is a safety hazard for your child, as well as the other children enrolled in the program. When a child comes to school wearing jewelry, parents are asked to take the jewelry with them. In addition, HCELC is not responsible for lost or stolen valuables.

FIELD TRIPS and WATER DAYS

HCELC supplements the in-class curriculum with off premise field trips. Parents provide written permission for their child to participate by signing the “KDHE Field Trip Permission Form”, which is located in the teacher corner in the classroom. Notification of a field trip is sent home in advance of the trip. If parents wish to attend the trip with their child, they should discuss attending with the classroom teacher. Transportation is provided by a bus contracted by the center.

During an eleven week period each summer, Fridays are “Water Day”, weather permitting. Children ages 12 months and older participate in various water play activities. Please pack a towel, swimsuit and water shoes in a bag with your child’s name for these days. Your child may wear their swimsuit to school also.

PARENT PARTICIPATION / VOLUNTEERS

HCELC offers opportunities for families to meet with one another on a formal and informal basis, work together on projects to support our program and provide support for each other. Our Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) meets at least three times a year at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, which is the time parents say works best with their families' schedules. This committee is made up of any interested parents or guardians of children enrolled at HCELC. The PAC focuses primarily on leadership roles, collaborating with HCELC and HCC on policies and programs that directly impact the children. Childcare and a light dinner are provided for our families during these meetings.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

27.1 Pre-Enrollment Requirements

Each parent is required to complete a pre-enrollment packet of information. This packet is to be returned to the center's office prior to the child's first day of attendance. All children are required to have a complete up-to-date immunization record and KDHE physical signed by a physician on file at HCELC. This is per our licensing regulations. The center only enrolls children who have received all state-mandated immunizations; the center does not accept medical or religious exemptions from immunizations.

If you wish to provide any individuals access to your child's health information, please contact the Center Director.

27.2 Children with Severe Allergies

For the safety of your child, parents are required to provide a signed copy of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment form detailing any allergies, food or otherwise, from which their child suffers at the time of enrollment or when the allergy is discovered. Any allergy that requires a food substitution must be written on the form or doctor's office letterhead and given to HCELC administration. No food substitutions will be given based on parents' requests.

Any medication required to treat an allergic reaction must be provided in accordance with the Medication Policy detailed in section 27.5.

27.3 Communicable Diseases

HCELC follows all health/communicable disease policies outlined in the "American Academy of Pediatrics Model Health Policies and Procedures Manual". Below is an outline of our exclusion policy, in accordance with the Kansas State Licensing Regulations. When children are excluded, parents will be notified in Brightwheel details of when their child can return to care. HCELC takes the health and welfare of our students seriously and holds parents responsible for not sending sick children to childcare. **At any time, HCELC's Director or Assistant Director reserves the right to exclude a child with or without a doctor's note for any period of time they feel the child is contagious.**

Parents are required to pick up an ill child within 45 minutes of notification by phone. If a parent is reached, but cannot pick their child up within 45 minutes, it becomes the parent's

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responsibility to arrange for alternate pick up with someone listed on the child's emergency contact form.

Children will be excluded from participation in the program if they exhibit symptoms of any communicable disease. They will not be permitted to return to the program until they are no longer contagious. Guidelines for determining the contagious period for a specific illness are based on the recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Hillcrest Christian Early Learning Center's Re-Admittance Policy	
Child's Symptom(s)	Re-admit When:
Fever of 101 F orally, 102 F rectally, or 100 F auxiliary	Fever-free for 24 hours
Any of the following symptoms: Cough Sore throat Sneezing Swollen glands Skin rash (other than mild diaper rash)	Doctor's note stating the child is non-communicable.
Red, watery, or draining eye(s)	All discharge has ceased or doctor's note stating the child is non-communicable
Drainage from the ear(s)	All drainage has ceased or a doctor's note stating the child is non-communicable.
Lice	After treatment, free of lice and nits.
Skin sores (Lesions possibly indicating chicken pox, impetigo, ringworm, scabies.)	All skin sores are healed or a doctor's note stating the child is non-communicable.
Diarrhea (Two or more loose watery stools per day.)	Diarrhea-free for 24 hours
Vomiting	Free of upset stomach and vomiting for 24 hours.

HCELC teachers evaluate each child on an individual basis to determine if illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities or results in the need for greater care than teachers can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.



27.4 Biting

HCELC recognizes that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the infant through 2 ½ year old classrooms. Parents with children in these classrooms should expect their children may be bit, or may bite another child. We understand parents are concerned and can be upset when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask you to remember this is a developmentally appropriate behavior and assure you our teachers are working to identify situations which provoke or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented. The teachers do not punish, nor harshly discipline children in the younger classrooms for biting behavior; they simply redirect the children to different activities in separate areas of the classroom. Parents are expected to work with teachers to identify methods and strategies to curb this behavior. If parents are uncooperative, they are asked to find alternate care for their child.

Children older than three years old may occasionally be involved in a biting incident. For children in this age group who bite, the teachers use the discipline procedures outlined in section 21.1 “Classroom Management”, as well as observe the child to determine what provokes or elicits this inappropriate behavior. Parents are expected to work with teachers to help their child control this behavior.

Parents are notified by incident reports in Brightwheel when a biting incident occurred during the course of the day. Teachers may not discuss with either parent the identity or the medical history of the other child involved in the incident. This information is considered to be confidential and cannot be disclosed. We recommend any child involved in a biting incident be seen by their family physician, if the parents are concerned about communicable diseases possibly resulting from the biting incident.

27.5 Dispensing Medication

HCELC only dispenses over-the-counter and/or prescription medication that is in original, labeled containers, and is accompanied by a doctor’s note with administration instructions. HCELC only gives medication to the child for whom the doctor’s note is written and for whom the medication container is labeled. HCELC is not allowed to dispense the first dose of medication unless given physician’s written permission for life-threatening situations. One doctor’s note is required for each course of treatment. If a child, for example, is to be given a course of antibiotics for 10 days, the doctor’s note must identify the dates that the medication is to be given.

Parents are required to complete a “Medication Form” each day that medication is to be dispensed. Medication Forms can be obtained from the classroom teacher. Several days

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of the same medication are kept on the same form. If a parent has not requested that medication be given, it will not be given.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that all prescription medication is properly labeled by a pharmacist and replaced prior to the expiration date. Parents provide written instructions that include the medication name, dosage, time and date medication is to be given. Parents are encouraged to demonstrate how to use any device used to administer medication and any special instructions regarding care of the device.

27.6 Fire / Emergency Drills

HCELC conducts monthly fire and emergency/evacuation drills. Parents, employees and children are not made aware of drill dates or times, as this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency/evacuation plans.

During a fire/emergency drill or real fire/emergency situation, parents may not drop off or pick up their children. Parents must wait until the drill is complete and the children have returned to the building to have their child signed into the program. Parents may feel free to wait with the child's class in the designated safe-zone outside of the building until the drill is complete.

In the event of a real fire/emergency situation, the director or designee informs each classroom teacher that the school is closing. All parents or emergency contact persons are notified of the situation by telephone. Consistent with the sick child pick up policy, children must be picked up within 45 minutes of the telephone call.

27.7 Alternate Safe Location

Should an HCELC administrator or emergency services personnel determine the building which houses the center is too dangerous to be occupied, the employees and children walk to Christ Lutheran Church, 11720 Nieman Rd. Once the children are assembled there, the employees call parents or emergency contact persons for pick up. As stated before, children must be picked up within 45 minutes of the telephone call.

27.8 Incident / Accident Reports

Should your child be involved in an incident/accident during the course of the school day, a teacher completes an "Incident Report" in Brightwheel.

The classroom teacher can briefly discuss the matter with you at pick-up. However, should you feel it necessary to have an in depth discussion or meeting, it is most

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appropriate to schedule the meeting for a later date because the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom. A telephone conference may be scheduled for later in the day or for the next day at nap/rest time if the parent(s) is unable to meet at the center during the course of the day.

27.9 Foods

HCELC participates in the Child and Adult Food Program (CACFP) sponsored by the Federal Government. HCELC receives reimbursement for serving meals that provide the daily recommended nutrition as outlined on the Food and Drug Administration's Food Pyramid. All of HCELC's menus are planned in accordance with these regulations and a printed menu is located on the parent information center the week prior. Parents of children at HCELC must agree to have their child eat what we prepare for them. Children are not allowed to bring outside meals or drinks to substitute for items on the menu. As a CACFP participant, HCELC agrees to provide each child the same meal/snack. **NO SUBSTITUTIONS WILL BE MADE WITHOUT A SIGNED CACFP FORM.** Forms can be obtained from the Administrative Assistant.

Food Allergies Parents of children who have a food allergy must provide current documentation of the allergy. HCELC will attempt to provide alternate menu items, if at all possible. We ask parents to pick up a menu from the parent information table, circle the foods their child can have and give the menu to their child's Lead Teacher on Monday each week. If the parent isn't sure which items their child can have, our administrative staff checks food labels for ingredients of the child's allergy. Parents of children with a lactose allergy must provide soy based milk weekly. HCELC asks parents to allow us to post allergy information in their child's classroom, so all teachers in the room are aware of the restrictions. If a child has special feeding needs, teachers record the type and quantity of food the child consumes and provide this information to the child's parents daily.

All meals at HCELC are served family style, with children sitting at tables to promote good manners, eating habits and socialization. Teachers sit with the children to model positive behaviors and engage them in conversation. Whenever age appropriate, food is passed among the children and they serve themselves. Children are encouraged to try all foods that are served. No child is forced to eat food, and no food is withheld as a form of punishment.

Birthday treats are a way for us to celebrate with children on their special day. If a child's birthday falls on the weekend or he/she has special plans that day, we are happy to celebrate whenever the parent would like. Parents inform Lead Teachers when and what

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they are bringing in for the class. Because some children have food allergies, parents are asked to consult with their child's Lead Teacher to determine which foods to avoid. We want all of the children in the classroom to participate in birthday celebrations.

Infant Meals Parents are responsible for providing all formula, cereal and jar food until the child is able to eat off our menu. All food & formula must come in a factory sealed container and is prepared according to manufacturer's guidelines. Adding solid food to bottles is only done with written instructions and a medical reason for this practice. Leftover formula from feedings is immediately stored in the refrigerator and disposed of at the end of the day. No formula, human milk or food is warmed in a microwave. To support breastfeeding, Infant Teachers are trained in preparing and storing human milk. Human milk must be in a labeled, dated container. We welcome Moms to come and breastfeed at any time during the day. If the Mom lets the Lead Teacher know she's coming, either by telling her or writing a note in Brighthwheel, the teacher will help her find a private relaxing place for feeding.

Teachers work with families to make sure food is based on the infants' individual nutritional needs and developmental stage. When it is time for a child to transition onto table food, menus are provided to the parents prior to the start of each week. We ask the parents to circle the items on the menu they wish their child to eat the following week. The teacher keeps this in the child's food bin for reference the following week.

Teachers do not allow babies to drink from propped bottles or have bottles in their cribs. Children are not allowed to carry bottles around in the rooms. Transitioning from a bottle to a sippy cup starts when the child is developmentally ready. 100% juice may be served to infants beginning at 8 months of age, if they are developmentally ready to drink from a cup. The total amount of juice given to a baby is limited to no more than four ounces per day.

STAFF EMPLOYMENT BY PARENTS

HCELC does not support nor promote employees babysitting for center families. If employees choose to babysit for a family, it is the sole responsibility of the employee to communicate directly with the parent regarding the arrangements. The Center Director, Assistant Director or Business Manager will not forward phone calls or assist in making arrangements by giving out phone numbers, etc. Babysitting is viewed by HCELC as a separate agreement between the sitter and the family and does not have any bearing on the center.

HCELC CONTACT INFORMATION

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